

Picket

no. 37

Monday 8th December

Release the Jailed Printers: Bob Shirfield, a *Sunday Times* NGA compositor on strike, has just been sentenced to nine months. Mike Hicks, SOGAT Central Branch officer has been sentenced to four months. Steven Savage, a Central Branch casual, was sentenced to three months in early October.

Friday 28th November: Glasgow. After a long period of inactivity the picketing at Kinning Park rose from the ashes and some 700 pickets gathered outside the Dirty Digger's Scottish Outpost. Started at 7.00pm. Police held both gates. Union officials reached new lows by appealing to the pickets to report lawbreakers to the police.

However, stouter hearts harassed the scabs, plod, and made it quite clear that they regarded the Scab Stalag as an insult to the history and traditions of Glasgow which has been a solid Trade Union City for a long time. Uniformed Strike Breakers were left flat footed and there were no arrests. After an hour and a half, march started round the block, missed scabs by a bit; then another half time round. Two white mice suffered from that well-known defect, the collapsing windscreen, and the main body of scabs did not arrive until 10.30, three hours late. In a later raid, the scabs were bagged with a shitty gloss medium grey.

Prominent among the banners were Firemen and Teachers both of whom are in dispute in the city. There were SOGAT Delegations from Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Wales and London. The Scottish NGA also had a presence. Pickets are looking forward to more activity in the near future. *Note:* While in Glasgow SOGAT office a parcel arrived from Hadleigh head office. TNT was the courier.

Saturday 29th November: CAPR March. The "Public Order Act" (ie "Police State Act") has now been passed. It gives cops the green light to ban or limit (in any way) any street events they don't like (we know what that means - pickets, demos etc), and then arrest *anyone* on it and jail *organisers* if they don't comply.

About 700 people from a whole range of active groups and campaigns came together on Saturday 29th under the umbrella of the Campaign Against Police Repression, to march through Islington to show they aim to defy these laws (which come into effect in January). Unemployed, gays, animal liberationists, anti-apartheid activists, women's groups, squatters, Stonehenge festival-goers, anarchists, peace campaigners, communists... were there: ie people directly affected, who recognise the urgency and importance of building up the spirit of defiance and solidarity *now*. Or else they'll pick us off, one by one...

However, despite a handful of printworkers present, there was a glaring lack of strikers, of miners and others active in labour struggles. Yet, come next month, guess who'll be among the first to get it?

Anyway... back to the action. We marched along Caledonian Road, past Holloway Women's Prison (shouting support), past the cop-shop (singing "Burn it Down" there for 5 minutes) and on to Pentonville Jail (more shouts, with some prisoners waving back). Not much happened on the way to Euston, Most popular chants were: "We will fight, We will react, Smash the Public Order Act" and "The streets are ours and that's a fact..." etc. At the end we marched into a conference hall to discuss the Act, how to defy it and build up solidarity amongst diverse (often hostile) groups. Everyone was urged to go to Wapping that night, for it's on the streets that we can come together to overcome our separation, and discuss what needs to be done. That's why they want us *off* the streets - OUR BLOODY STREETS!

PS: Another march is planned the Saturday after the Act becomes law in January. It will be illegal, so it's got to be BIG. Watch out for details... (*By a regular picket, unemployed*)

Tuesday 2nd December. 8.00am precisely. Relieved of much dead wood, and despite efforts to publicise this surprise picket, over 200 pickets turned up on time and moved to block the gates to Fortress Wapping. No leaders, no speeches, just action. An enjoyable two hours was spent telling the scabs just what we thought of them, and no more than a handful of police to spoil the fun. (Amazing how it's no longer an arrestable offence to shout 'Scab' when there are more pickets than police, isn't it!) One arrest made when one John Wayne look-alike reminded us how much the police hate the working classes and would love to ride roughshod over all of us. 10.00am back to Wellclose and beyond...

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Pickets once again confounded Plod and the Scabs by taking the Main Gate again on Tuesday 2nd December at 8.00am. There were only half a dozen uniformed strikebreakers on duty when 240 pickets massed at the front gate. Plod put a van across Pennington Street, to protect the Scabs, but ever resourceful pickets formed behind it. After about 40 minutes, scabs started coming in on foot, escorted by Police reinforcements. No lorries or coaches were able to breach the pickets for two hours. Finally, the police arrived on top of some unfortunate creatures which resembled horses. At 10.00 the police tried to trample pickets with the horses and pickets made an orderly retreat. There were no arrests.

Wednesday 3rd December, Wapping: Three hundred marched from Tower Hill. Meanwhile, two hundred were marching from Aldgate East, along Commercial Road to Butcher Row and back west along the Highway. Spirits in the 315th day of the strike are good.

Saturday 6th December, Wapping: About 2,500 took part in the regular march from Tower Hill. Numbers moving up to Commercial Road were down, as had been swamped by police in recent weeks. The few hundred pickets walking on the footpath were harassed by police who made some arrests for walking on the pavement.

● **London Buses:** Two printworker pickets call at Merton Bus Garage in South London, to deliver further anti-Murdoch literature to TGWU friends. On arrival, find the craftsmen have all gone on strike as part of the dispute in London Transport's engineering section. Foreman wails how terrible it was for these men to walk out and leave him alone to cope! Well, *almost* alone... save for the three electricians of course. Busmen beware – these bastards will scab on you as well if you give them the chance.

● **Sealink Strike:** True to form, the union bureaucracy bollocksed the main thrust of the successful sit-in on South Coast ferries, with a cheap and nasty sell-out formula on worse terms than Murdoch's crap. However, 500 jobs were saved and some of the worst excesses of management's proposals had to be dropped in the face of continuing pockets of strong resistance. Well done, the rank and file, showing that the pickets are the heart of the strike – not the tastefully-suited arseholes that sit in the cosy offices of the full-time officials of the unions. Not out of danger yet, the remaining sea-going staff met recently in Southampton to plan future strategy to defend themselves against any further attempts to deunionise British ferries.

● **Southampton NUS:** Placemen of the seamen's union worried sick, as Cunard and P&O smell out weaknesses displayed by the bureaucracy who mismanaged the ferry strike. Liner owners who did well out of the Falklands conflict display how far their patriotism extends by sending QE2 and Canberra to West Germany for multi-million pound refits, while British shipyards close for lack of orders. Now the bastards have engaged offshore crewing agencies to recruit staff at third world rates, replacing British crews and saving on national insurance, pensions and welfare. This is made all the worse by scab Cunard seamen who sold their jobs on exactly the same terms as Murdoch offered (approx. £800 per year of service) thus giving the green light for mass redundancies in the industry. One Bermuda-based agency states: "We certainly have no intention of recognising unions on these ships". Southampton branch of seamen's union announced that one sixth of all seafarers' jobs have been totally lost in 1986 because of convenience flags and agency crewing tactics.

● **Wapping Spirit Spreading?** Following on the tactics used by J. Hanger & Co., the artificial limb makers currently doing a Murdoch on their staff at Roehampton Hospital, comes news of a similar management move to do the same with staff employed by the Avon Rubber Company at Melksham, Wiltshire. This is a "one employer" (if Avon dies, the town dies also) situation, where management have the whip-hand of 750 jobs to throw down the drain. Now comes news that a group is being formed to organise pickets at Avon, just like those at Roehampton have done. They have to convince workers that Murdoch-style redundancy pay is a poor alternative to the dignity of employment, when management's sole reason for sacking the 750 is "the need to double profits" already at two and a half million pounds for 1986!

● This firm advertises in the *Sun*: Abbey National Building Society, Freepost, Dept. AK2, Abbey National Building Society, Bristol BS13 7BR. And this firm advertises in the *Times*: British Telecom, Department ACA 748, Freepost 800, London SW1 8YS. Don't delay – Write today!

Income: £1.50 sales; £5 NGA machine minder; £5.12 Saturday night pickets; £120 Glasgow supporters; £ *Mirror* NGA; £2 cabbie; £1 NUJ striker; £2.94 NGA strikers; £10 *S. Mirror* warehouse; £5 Wednesday night.

Published by picketing print union members and residents.
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